



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Mike Knapp

For Immediate Release

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N **Knapp: ‘No More Budget Gimmicks’**
E ***Supports Growing Government Within Charter Limit***
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Councilmember Mike Knapp today issued the following statement following the County Council’s action on Spending Affordability Guidelines:

R “For too long, we in government have had a tendency to measure our commitment to county government services purely by how much money we can spend. That needs to change.
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“We need solutions, not gimmicks. We can start by looking closely at how much we spend versus how much revenue we can realistically bring in from local taxes. Funding at the charter limit would allow us to increase county government spending by about \$210 million, growing from \$2.8 billion in FY 2005, to \$3.0 billion in FY 2006.

A “The budget submitted to the County Council by the County Executive increases FY 2006 spending by about \$280 million – exceeding the increase allowed under charter limit by almost \$70 million. At the county level, that is not a small amount of money. I believe we can and should increase spending; however, I also strongly believe we need to keep the increase within the boundaries established by the charter limit.
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“Countywide, voters have supported increasing their own taxes to pay for education, social services for the neediest citizens, and other programs vital

to providing for vibrant communities and a better life for all residents. I hear what residents are saying – they like the quality of life we enjoy in this county, and recognize it comes with a cost. Given this, it is critical that government do what it can to ensure that hard-earned tax revenues are used responsibly and for the purposes our residents intended.

“I share the Council President’s view that the county budget needs to be ‘morally responsible’ – but I believe this means ensuring we have the resources for services not just for this year, but for every year. We need to look carefully at what services are most critical to the county and its citizens – including those the county is required by law to fund – and ensure we adequately fund those first. Given limitations in the budget, it will be impossible to guarantee dramatic increases in funding for every government program, service, or agency. Our priority programs need to be funded first.

“So, no more gimmicks. The resolution I introduced last year, which the council passed unanimously, requires the county council and all county government agencies to establish spending priorities. These priorities should reflect what’s fundamentally important to the county and its residents.

“I’m working hard to put together a responsible and accountable budget – one that increases spending within the charter limit, that adequately funds the county’s critical services, and ensures that the peoples’ money is spent as wisely as possible.”

Michael J. Knapp represents the UpCounty in District 2, which includes Barnesville, Clarksburg, Damascus, Germantown, Laytonsville, Olney, and Poolesville.